

REMARKS

The Office Action dated February 7, 2006, has been received and carefully noted. The above amendments and the following remarks are being submitted as a full and complete response thereto.

By this amendment, Claims 1, 17, and 18-23 have been amended. New Claim 31 has been added. Claims 2 and 16 have been canceled. Thus, Claims 1, 3-15, 17, 22, and 31 are currently pending in the application and subject to examination. Claims 18-21 and 23-30 are currently withdrawn.

Allowable Subject Matter

The Applicants acknowledge and appreciate the indication by the Examiner that Claims 2, 16, 17, and 22 contain allowable subject matter and would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

In this regard, the Applicants respectfully submit that the allowable subject matter recited in dependent Claim 2 has been incorporated into independent Claim 1, thereby placing Claim 1 in condition for allowance. Claim 2 has been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer. Further, Applicants have added new independent Claim 31, which incorporates the allowable subject matter of Claim 16 into original Claim 1.

The dependency of Claims 17-23 has been amended to properly depend from Claim 31 rather than a canceled claim. As Claims 3-15 depend from allowable Claim 1, and Claims 17 and 22 depend from allowable Claim 31, Applicants respectfully submit that claims 3-15, 17, and 22 are allowable for the same reasons Claims 1 and 31 are

allowable, as well as for the additional subject matter recited therein. As Claims 1 and 2 were considered to be generic to all species, many of the withdrawn claims should be brought back into the application and also be indicated as allowed.

Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. §§ 102(b) and 103(a)

Claims 1, 3, 6-8, and 13-15 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Bachmann et al. (U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2002/0003407, hereinafter "Bachmann"). Claims 4, 5, 9, and 12 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Bachmann in view of Jin et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,982,095, hereinafter "Jin").

Applicants respectfully submit that, in view of the above-described amendments, Claims 1, 3-15, 17, 22, and 31 are allowable, and the rejections are rendered moot. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the rejections.

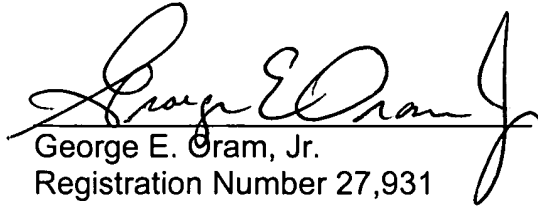
Conclusion

In view of the foregoing, reconsideration of the application, withdrawal of the outstanding rejections, allowance of at least Claims 1, 3-15, 17, 22, and 31, and the prompt issuance of a Notice of Allowability are respectfully solicited.

Should the Examiner believe anything further is desirable in order to place this application in better condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

In the event that this paper is not being timely filed, the Applicants respectfully petition for an appropriate extension of time. Any fees for such an extension, together with any additional fees that may be due with respect to this paper, may be charged to Counsel's Deposit Account Number 01-2300, referencing Docket Number 107156-00212.

Respectfully submitted,


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